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A TOUR OF BEAUTIFUL ISLANDS

“ISLES of Spice and Palm,” by A. Hyatt Verrill and published by D. Appleton & Co., renders a service not only to the lovely islands in the Caribbean sea which it describes, but also to the reader whom it makes acquainted with their charms. Let us accompany Mr.

Verrill, so far as space will permit, on what he calls an “ideal voyage, where winter is left behind the second day out,” and, having visited St. Thomas and the other Danish islands, pause, nearly fifty miles eastward from St. Croix, where massive, conical Saba rises from the sea. Strangest of all the islands and wonderfully interesting is Saba. Here on this sea-girt, isolated, volcanic cone the people dwell in

a snug little town, nearly one thousand feet above the sea, on the floor of an extinct crater, and although literally at the top of the island, the name of the town is “Bottom.” The passengers disembark or “go aboard,” as the Sabans say, upon a steep slope of rock and shingle on the southern shore of the island.

Above the landing place a rough

flight of stone steps—eight hundred in number—leads up the precipitous side of the mountain.

Here in the crater the people dwell in a temperate climate of perpetual June and the gardens are filled with potatoes, strawberries and corn grow-

ing side by side with yams, bananas and oranges, while over walls and porches clamber tropical vines gorgeous with flowers.

Of all Saba's industries, perhaps the most important and strangest is boat building. Think of it! Here in a volcanic crater, 1,000 feet above the sea, where every plank and timber must be carried on men's heads, are built boats which for staunchness and seaworthiness are famous in all the West

Indies. Truly it's hard to “beat the Dutch.”

The natives of St. Kitts, in common with the natives of many of the islands, have a curious form of celebration known as “Running mask,” which takes place at Christmas time and just before Lent.

It is a sort of Mardi Gras, but far wilder, more primitive, and more pic-



A Guadeloupe Belle

turesque than the carnival merry-making of New Orleans and other places of French antecedents. Clad in the weirdest and most striking of costumes, the natives swarm through the streets and high-ways, in groups, crowds, pairs and singly.

Dancing, cavorting, yelling and singing, they overwhelm the towns which are completely given over to the occasion. Into dooryards

and shops they swarm, begging drinks which are never refused, chanting strange songs, performing savage dances and accompanied by so-called musicians playing weird strains on triangles, pipes and "sand boxes"—strange instruments like gigantic nutmeg graters which are sawed with a piece of steel umbrella rib. There is much of interest on the Isle of Nevis. Here Alexander

Hamilton was born and here he dwelt until eleven years of age, and his home, although in ruins, may still be seen on a hill near Charlestown, the capital. It was in Nevis also that Lord Nelson was married, and in the ancient "Fig Tree Church" one may view the marriage

register recording the ceremony.

If the visitor to the islands is fond of the chase he should not fail to visit Barbuda, a low, flat islet some thirty miles north of Antigua and formerly

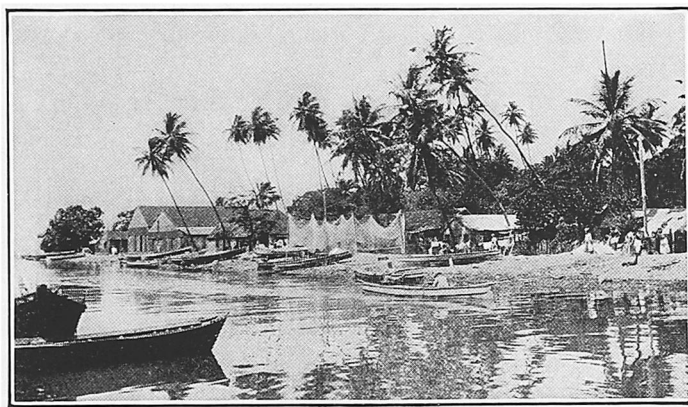
owned by the Codringtons, who lived like feudal lords upon this tiny bit of land, literally monarchs of all they surveyed. Here from Africa they brought slaves to till the fields; from England,

to while away their spare time, they introduced Guinea fowl, pheasants and other game to add their quota to the pigeons, doves, ducks and plover that already teemed upon the spot.

Vast as a continent seems Guadeloupe as one steams along its shores in the lee of its mighty mountains. One of the most surprising features of these islands is their size, and the stranger is invariably over-

whelmed with wonder to find places which are mere specks upon the maps, extending as far as eye can see from horizon to horizon and towering in massive mountain ranges for a mile and more into the blue vault of heaven.

Even more inadequate do mere fig-



Along the River Banks are Picturesque Fishing Villages—Martinique



The Canals are a Feature of Demerara

ures prove when one undertakes to travel across and through the islands. We may learn that an island is but thirty miles long and fifteen wide, but we don't realize that a large portion of the area is "set on end," nor do we dream how much land, what stupendous mountains, broad plains, great swamps, roaring torrents, enormous waterfalls, great lakes, deep valleys, and vast forests can be crowded into 450 square miles until we tramp, ride or drive over such an island as Guadeloupe.

St. Thomas may have seemed lofty after five days of endless sea and sky. Santa Cruz appeared the freshest and greenest of lands. As you gazed at St. Kitts it seemed impossible that anything could be more varied or luxuriant or that mountains could be higher near the sea, but all are rolled into one and multiplied a hundredfold in the bulk and majesty of this island over which floats the tricolor of France.

Let us linger here for a glimpse of life under the tricolor. For with their French love of bright colours the na-

tives of Point-à-Pitre keep their buildings covered with a coat of paint, and while the brilliant blues, pinks, reds, yellows and greens might appear garish and gaudy in the north, they seem quite in harmony with the bril-

liant sun, gaily attired women and dazzling sky of this tropic city, and give an air of brightness, life and gaiety to the place which is very pleasing.

The center of attraction and the busiest spot of Point-à-Pitre is the market, where, on Saturdays, come the country people from far and near to sell their produce and their wares. At such times the square occupied by the market fairly swarms with men, women and children; the din of the French patois is deafening and the place is ablaze with col-



Under Barbados Palms

our. Here, for the first time, the visitor sees the picturesque, attractive native costumes of the French islands; the dress that lends comeliness and distinction to the coloured women; that is wonderfully becoming and which makes the French West Indian women appear as of a different race from the ragged,

unkempt, slovenly negresses of Antigua, Montserrat and St. Kitts.

Although differing in details in the various islands, the French West Indian dress is very similar whether in Guadeloupe, Martinique or Dominica—for Dominica is more French than English, though under Britain's flag, and sandwiched as it is between two colonies of France, it has retained its French characteristics to large extent.

The dominating feature of the costume is the turban—not a cheap, cotton bandana as in our southern states, nor yet the carelessly tied square of gaudy cloth of the British isles, but a gorgeous striped and checked affair made and sold for this special purpose and known as a "Madras."

In each of the islands the Madras is tied in a distinct manner, and by the form of their turbans the natives of Guadeloupe, Dominica or Martinique may be distinguished. In Guadeloupe the Madras is tied in close folds about the head and is knotted over the right temple, with the two corners spread open like fans to form a jaunty, plume-like bow. On either side the hair is

coiled into conical masses which serve to hold the turban in position, and as many of the women have hair far too short or too kinky to braid and coil, artificial cones of hair are often pinned upon the head. Across the shoulders a bright silk foulard is neatly folded and strings of gold and coral beads encircle the neck. The dress itself is a short-waisted affair, with enormous, flowing skirt of large pattern and flaming colours, and great dangling earrings of gold complete the costume. Thus attired the Guadeloupe women are marvelous to behold, and no lily of the field—much less Solomon—was ever attired like unto one of them.

Space unfortunately compels THE LOTUS to cut short this interesting tour. But the voyager need not. He can visit "the loftiest of the Caribbees," Dominica; Martinique, the birthplace of the Empress Josephine; St. Lucia, Britain's "Gibraltar of the West Indies;" Barbados, which they call "Little England;" Granada and Trinidad; and finally "The Tip End of the Continent," Demerara, on the Northeast coast of South America.



On the Way to Market—Trinidad